3:Naah E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
[P. 456-A) Teklum

121
621
632

It is in the context of these structural divisions that social change and its behavioral indices must be analyzed.

682
182

Homicide—an act viewed as a delict in national Mexican law—has in the past two decades become an accepted strategy in social interaction. It is part of the expectations of the society upon which members predicate their own code of behavior and in terms of which
[626] they react to others. Gossip not only fails to
[521] suppress homicide, but serves to create a consensual base for condoning it. The corpse is re-
[764] ferred to as "the one who had the guilt," *Pa stukel smul*, and even when knowledge of the particular act is lacking, certain assumptions are made: the killer was someone in the community; the victim provoked the killer. In list-
682 ing crimes, informants sometimes failed to
• 674 mention killing, or they included it after witch-
[524] craft, theft, or adultery. Homicide is considered a *reaction* to crime, not a crime in itself.

The rate is phenomenally high—up to 251.2 per 100,000 (when adjusted to bring the whole township's population of a little over 3,000 to the base for measuring international rates)—and it is increasing. This compares with national rates of 4.8 for the United States, 31.9 for Mexico (United Nations Demographic Yearbook 1964), and 36.2 for a nearby town (Favre 1964).

The following tabulation summarizes the homicides by decades since 1915, the earliest date for which records are available.

1915–1924	4
1925–1934	5
1935–1944	19
1945–1954	9
1955–1964	35

[114] Figures prior to 1950 are not apt to be accurate, for only since that time have there been adequate reporting and checking of township records. In the following tabulation, the marked increase in the annual number of homicides since 1960 represents a real increase.

1950	1	1958	1
1951	0	1959	1
1952	1	1960	4
1953	1	1961	7
1954	1	1962	6
1955	0	1963	7
1956	1	1964	4
1957	4	1965	9

682
674
121

In order to assess the meaning of its remarkable increase during the 1960's, I have pro-

3:Naah E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
[P.456-B] Teklum

682 ceeded along two lines of enquiry. First, I have
•674 analyzed the circumstances surrounding the
12 deaths in as many cases as my informants could remember. Variations in the components of homicidal acts—the setting, agents, purpose, and outcome—suggested the different assumptions underlying each case. Secondly, I have correlated the different kinds of homicide with structural and organizational changes in
682 the community. The analysis of cases in Sec-
674 tion I summarizes the patterned components
128 of behavior. The social environment providing the cues to the actors is explored in Section II.

682 ## 1. THE PATTERNED COMPONENTS OF
165 37 HOMICIDE CASES[3]
[128]

The following tabulations and discussion are based on the 37 cases presented in Table 1.

Who Is Killed

Sex:	all male	
Age:	18–22	5
	27–30	7
	34–38	7
	42–48	8
	50	3
	60	2
	65	2
	70	2
	??	1
[463] Occupation:	curer	8
	political leader	1
	farmer	28

One-half the total number of killings occurred to those between the ages of 34 to 50. However, as the six victims aged 60 and over indicate, survival to a late age does not ensure that one will die a nonviolent death. The age of the victim may be correlated with motive, insofar as some events leading to conflict occur
68 only at certain times in the life cycle. Thus,
[578] betrothal conflicts involved only young men, while victims accused of witchcraft were older: 27 was the age of the youngest, and 16 out of the 18 men killed as witches were over 34. Cattle theft, on the other hand, occurred throughout the age range.

682 Eight of the victims—more than one-fifth of
165 them—were curers, a much higher proportion
756 than their share in the total population, for there are only about a dozen now living in the town center of 1,900.

682 There is a personality type recognized by the
156 community as distinctive of those who "get

683
682
1124
411
•674
69

3:Maah E-5 (1964-1965) 1967 MY9 Tzeltal MY9
Tekium
[P.458]

TABLE 1. CASE ANALYSIS OF HOMICIDES OCCURRING FROM 1938 TO 1965
(AS RECALLED FROM MEMORY BY THREE INFORMANTS)*

CASE No.	DATE	AGE	WEAPON	WOUNDS	PLACE	TIME	SUSPECTS	MOTIVE	OUTCOME
1	1938—fiesta in neighboring town	50	pistol, machete	head cut off	in houseyard of borrowed house in neighboring town	afternoon	?	Accused of witchcraft	No one apprehended.
2	1945	65	pistol	shot between eyes	in street	night	two drinking companions (relatives of victim)	Drunken quarrel	Two companions went to jail. While in jail, with help of witch from neighboring town, set fire to four houses in pueblo.
3	1946	48	machete (brothers disarmed him of shotgun)	?	road at outskirts of town, at cross	dawn (5 A.M.)	brothers: 1 elder, 2 younger	Curer, suspected of being witch.	One brother went to jail for five years.
4	1946	45	machete	well chopped up	neighboring hamlet	?	?	"I don't know what crime he had. He was a curer."	No one went to jail.
5	1946—fiesta San Francisco	38	machete and gun	well cut up, head and neck	in woods	?	?	Accused of witchcraft.	No one complained.
6	1946	50	shotgun	?	in street	night, after curing ceremony, very drunk	?	Curer, accused of witchcraft.	Wife complained, but no witness.
7	1958	37	nail	in throat	in street	night, after curing ceremony	father of boy who died of witchcraft	Curer, accused of witchcraft.	Before dying, victim revealed name of killer, but local authorities would not arrest him. Case went to higher court, but no witnesses.
8	1960—11/28	60	machete	cut off head	in street	night, after curing ceremony	son-in-law	Accused of witchcraft by curer at ceremony for daughter.	Son-in-law fled town.
9	1960—12/18 fiesta, fiesta. Lucia	28	knife, machete	heart, throat, stomach	?	?	killer paid by cattle owners	Stole cattle.	Released killer on bail of 2,500 pesos paid by cattle owners.

682
683
124
411
674
•

10	1960—12/18 fiesta, Sta. Lucia	60	shotgun	shot in back- bullet entered lung	houseyard, two feet from house	7 P.M., after curing ceremony	brother-in-law	Curer, accused of witchcraft.	No one apprehended.
11	1961—6/16	70	machete	many wounds	near highway	9 P.M., after gathering of curers	neighbors	Curer, accused by other curers of being witch causing epidemic.	Neighbors were not identified.
12	1961	35	shotgun	shot in back	highway	?	leader of political independance movement (wife's brother)	Refused to pay tribute to independence leaders.	Killer's wife (victim's sister) left husband. No one jailed. Later, killer killed by victim's brother (case 18).
13	1961—7/26 fiesta in neighboring hamlet	30	?	?	street, near cantina	late at night	wife's brother	Very abusive, fought drunks.	Wife's brother fled town.
14	1961—10/24 fiesta in neighboring hamlet	45	knife	many wounds	?	?	neighbors	Accused of being witch by neighbors.	No one apprehended.
15	1961—12/15 fiesta, Sta. Lucia	37	gun	?	cantina	late at night	?	Accused of witchcraft.	Wife agreed he was witch.
16	1962—9/25	18	?	?	?	?	rival for girl	Fought over girl.	No one accused.
17	1962—9/25	20	knife	stabs	in street	night (1 A.M.)	cattle owners	Accused of stealing cattle.	Went to jail, but released on bail put up by cattle owners.
18	1962—9/26	35	gun	shot in head	highway	(4 P.M.)	brother-in-law's brother.	Revenge—victim had killed his own brother-in-law (case 12).	Killer declared he had killed. Paid fine and went free.
19	1962—11/15 fiesta, All Saints	20	knife, gun	stabbed in heart and shot	drinking in cantina	late at night	rival for girl	Fought over girl.	No one accused.
20	1962—12/24 fiesta, Christmas Eve	50	gun	shot between eyes	road outside town	dawn (6 A.M.)	leader of cattle association	Accused of stealing cattle.	?
21	1963—4/4	36	hatchet	head	in woods, given drink by killers	5 P.M.	?	Curer, accused of witchcraft.	No one apprehended. Brother did some investigating.
22	1963—7/24	45	?	?	in bed	night, after curing ceremony	Curer from neighboring town	Victim had accused suspect of being a witch when curing a patient.	Nothing.

* Two more homicides were recalled for 1964 than official records show. They most probably occurred in a previous year.

682
124
411
674
69
683

3:Rosh E-5 (1964-1965) 1967 MW9 Tzeltal MW9
Teklum
[P460]

TABLE 1 (*cont.*)

Case No.	Date	Age	Weapon	Wounds	Place	Time	Suspects	Motive	Outcome
23	1963—8/28 fiesta, San Augustin	?	sandals	kicked to death	in cantina	afternoon	drinking companions	Barroom brawl	One of two assailants arrested, bailed out.
24	1963—9/25	70	shotgun	forehead	in field	late afternoon	sons of man whom he was accused of having killed by witchcraft	Accused by curers in neighboring towns of having caused sickness	Nothing.
25	1964—1/2 fiesta, New Years	50	machete, gun	?	street outside house of new president	night (11 P.M.)	killer paid by brothers	Accused of stealing cattle.	Brother fled, but was jailed when he returned.
26	1964—1/3 Carnival	44	gun, machete	chopped up with machete	street, one block from house	night (11 P.M.)	?	Accused of witchcraft by neighbors.	No one accused.
27	1964—5/14	50	gun	forehead	highway	afternoon	Ladino injury distiller, not of community	Victim had denounced distiller to federal authorities.	No one accused.
28	1964—9/1	30	gun	?	milpa, after his brothers gave him drink	afternoon	his brothers	Accused of witchcraft.	One brother fled. The other was killed but claimed the first one did it.
29	1964 9/14	65	knives	many knife wounds	street, three blocks from house	late at night, after gathering of curers	curers	Curer, accused by other curers of being witch causing epidemic	No one accused.
30	1964	22	?	?	eight meters from his house	night (1 A.M.)	close friend, hired by cattle owners, brothers of killer	Accused of stealing cattle.	Freed on bail.
31	1965—2/14	42	machete	head cut off	road to neighboring hamlet	night (3 A.M.)	?—at first thought it was wood spirit, until they found head	?	No one accused.
32	1965—2/22	45	knife, stone	stabbed in heart, head bashed	street near house	night	?	Accused of witchcraft by neighbors.	No one accused.
33	1965—3/21 Carnival	45	shotgun	?	street	night	?	Accused of witchcraft.	No one apprehended.

682
124
411
•674
69
683

3:Mam B-5 (1964-1965)1967
MY9 Tzeltal MY9
Tekium
[P.461-A]

34	1965 - 4/24	27	gun	?	found in woods, body dragged there from town	night (1 A.M.)	brother-in-law	He had relations with 14-year-old sister-in-law. When he tried reconciliation, became drunk, abusive.	No witness, no blood found in in-laws' house.
35	1965—5/30 fiesta, just before San Francisco	35	shotgun	three shots entered back	road	afternoon	?	Stole cattle, corn.	Killers left note saying old man did it, but no one believed it.
36	1965- 6/13	42	machete	hand severed, side wounds	road to milpa	6 P.M.	son by first marriage	Failed to help son get a wife; accused by dying wife of causing her death by witchcraft.	Widow spread rumors that it was his son, but refused to testify.
37	1965—10/?	20	shotgun	back	in houseyard	6 P.M.	rival for girl	Accident—killer mistook him for his brother, who was challenging killer's suit for a girl.	?

3:Nash E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
[P.461-B] Teklum

682 704 756 location of the soul, *sč'ulel*, in the tongue, *yal*, wherein lies the particular power of the curer. This possibly suggested the mode of attack.

682 411 412 [223] [224] The instruments used to kill are carried by the farmers of this area most of the time. The men go to their milpa with a machete strapped to their side, a shotgun slung over their shoulder, and sometimes even a knife stuck in their waistband. They frequently interrupt work to hunt birds, rabbits, and deer. The shotgun does not excite suspicion or comment when it is seen. The men of Teklum are technologically prepared to kill in the course of an ordinary day's work.

682 [152] [683] The number of wounds and the thoroughness with which the job is done (see Table 1) suggest not so much the fury of the assailants as the fear motivating their act. In a witch-killing, it appears to be thought necessary to hack up the victim completely so that his power is effectively ended: one witch was cut into 32 pieces; another had 166 wounds.

682 674 656 The death acts drawn up in the local courthouse have been increasingly specific in their statements as to the wounds inflicted ever since the government's intervention in the case of an accidental death in 1950. The local authorities were threatened with a fine of 600 pesos if the details were not properly recorded. The careful measurement of the body in relation to the road and to neighboring milpas and the measurement of the size and depth of the wounds provide the screen of complicity that wards off further investigation by federal authorities and preserves local independence. There is never any questioning of suspects or attempt to solve the crime by officials. The success of the ploy is illustrated in the following account:

> Pedro had animals at the spring and had gone out early with ropes in his bag to lasso them. He was found with a rope tied around his neck hung from a *čikinib* tree. We went out and measured the length and thickness of the rope and how many centimeters it penetrated his neck. We put all these facts in the report, which gave the cause of death as suicide.
>
> At that time we had a schoolteacher in town who asked the dead man's wife why the town didn't investigate who killed him because someone must have done it. He went with the widow to the Ministerio Publico in the capital. Well, when they came out, there were all the facts in the death act. [Informant laughed heartily as he recalled this success.] He saw that we had discovered the body at 3 P.M., that the rope was 15 meters

3:Bush E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
[P.462-A] Teklum

682 674 656 long, and that the body was suspended 35 centimeters from the ground. He saw that we had raised the act well, and nothing was done.

Who Kills and Why

682 562 The only universal factor among the killers is sex—only men kill (Table 2). Women do not kill nor are they killed in Teklum. This does not mean that they are not subject to as many tensions or abuses as men, or that these have no channels for expression. Women work through men by agitating them to homicide. [593] Sometimes revenge is delayed, for the agents chosen by women may be children who must reach maturity before accomplishing the deed (see case 36, in which the son's animosity toward his father was kindled at his mother's deathbed).

682 683 621 Neighbors are a significant group in witchcraft killing. (Neighbors may be listed in Table 2 under another relationship, for instance as brother-in-law or as cattle owner.) They are the informal judges of suspected witches, and it is frequently they who kill a man considered to be a witch. When the curers accuse a man of causing epidemics, his neigh- [608] bors are usually the executors. For this reason, most people try to neutralize the hostility of

[p.462-C]

682
593
674
606
607

TABLE 2. SUSPECT, BY MOTIVE FOR HOMICIDE

	Brother	Brother-in-law	Son	Son-in-law	Neighbors	Relative of witchcraft killing	Curers	Cattle owners	Rival for girl	Drunks	Not of community	??	Totals
[688] Victim was accused of witchcraft	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	—	—	—	—	8	18
Victim accused suspect of witchcraft	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
[685] Cattle theft	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	1	6
[678] Rivalry over girl	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	3
Abusive behavior	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
[679] Drunken quarrel	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	2
[627] Avenge a death (not caused by witchcraft)	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	2
Political conflict	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
??	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	2
Total	3	5	1	1	2	2	1	4	3	2	3	11	37

3:Nash E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
[P.463-A] Teklum

000 cept the verdict or to avenge the killing.

682 In selecting a single motive in categorizing
674 the killer and the reason for his act, I have dis-
128 torted reality more than in the other tabula-
tions. Motivations include both the instru-
mental reason and the rationalization for the
act. The complexity of motivation is correlated
with the multiplicity of social ties existing be-
tween any two people. For example, when a
man shoots his father for failure to provide him
with his bride price, but feels justified and ex-
pects social approval because his mother on her
deathbed accused the father of having pro-
voked her illness by witchcraft (case 36, Table
1), it is impossible to assign a single primary
cause. However, in order to correlate the fac-
tors of agent and motive, I have been forced to
select only a single feature in categorizing
them.

682 In one-half of all the cases reported, the
674 motive attributed for homicide is suspicion of
675 witchcraft. (Whether or not witchcraft is ever
practiced here is irrelevant since men act in
terms of their interpretation of an event, not of
the event itself.) Almost all sickness in the
community is believed to be caused by witch-
craft (the term for witch and witchcraft,
?ak'?amel, means "giver of sickness"). The
family of a sick person consults the local
curers, who pulse the patient. The witch "has
left his signature in the blood" of the patient,
and by pulsing him the curer can "hear and
feel" who the witch is. His procedure is to ask
the patient to tell what troubles he has had
with his neighbors and relatives, and as the
patient recites the names of the people with
whom he has had conflict, the pulse jumps. As
in the use of the lie detector, this indicates
where there is high affect; in Teklum it is inter-
preted as positive indicator of the guilty per-
son, the witch. If the curer gets drunk enough,
he may reveal the name of the witch, but he
usually prefers not to—I know of at least three
cases, one of which is reported here, in which
the man who announced the name of the witch
was killed by the person he accused. The fam-
ily may then check the consultation with
curers in neighboring towns or even in the de-
partmental capital. Since these distant curers
are not inhibited by fear of the witch, they
name the guilty one. The family, or the pa-
tient, may broadcast their suspicions, even
announcing the consultation over the loud-
speakers in the local liquor shops. If the pa-
tient dies, a member of the family may act on

3:Naah E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
[P. 463 - B] Teklum

682 674 75 these suspicions and kill the witch. If he should kill the witch while the patient is still alive, it is believed that the patient will die.

682 685 674 [463] [697] Killing men for cattle theft (six cases) is a relatively recent occurrence. It has put homicide on the market: the associations of cattle-owners have hired killers in three of the six cases. In addition to the killer's fee, they pay the fine to release him from prison. Fines for homicide have increased in the past five years—from 1,000 to 3,000 pesos—but not sufficiently to price the murder of cattle thieves out of the market. A good bull is worth [435] 1,500 pesos, and the threat of further loss by theft seems to justify the expenditure of fees and fines. When the cattle-owners lose some of their herd, they go to spiritualists or to San Miguel, the talking saint of Ixtapa, to find out who did the stealing. Since such evidence does not hold up in court, legal settlement is not attempted. Legal action, moreover, would create an enemy who might seek revenge. A Ladino secretary of the town center who had lost a bull accused a man of stealing his cattle and demanded 500 pesos in compensation. By receiving the money he jeopardized his safety, and eventually he had to leave town.

685 787 776

685 694

The Resolution of the Case

682 69 It is nearly impossible to find witnesses to homicide. Of these 37 cases, 28 resulted in no action being taken by the authorities, and in five cases where the killers went to jail, they were released with the payment of minimal fines. In the calculations of the townspeople, it is hardly worth risking one's neck to get such a minimal revenge.

682 593 626 [683] However, this does not mean that homicide goes unnoticed in the community. After a killing the widow sings of the life of the dead man. If she is in agreement with the verdict arrived at by the killer and others, she will deny knowledge of what he has done, or even suggest that she too was aware of what harm he has caused (one widow implied that her husband, killed as a witch, was responsible for the death of four of her six children). If she objects to the verdict, she sings of what a good man he was and how blameless. She will then air her own suspicions in the following weeks as to who killed her husband.

682 683 627 Following the funeral, when the women have left the cemetary, the men sit at the grave. As they measure out a liter of liquor and pass it around, they advance hypotheses as

3:Nash E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Teklum
[P. 468-B]

The authority of the president, however, depends on the use of legal sanctions of prison sentences and fines imposed by extracommunity enforcement agencies in the departmental capital. The weakness of these sanctions—the fine for homicide is 1,000 to 3,000 pesos or three to five years' imprisonment—means that these threats do not have a controlling effect on people's decisions to act. Homicide, carried out by individuals who feel themselves to be threatened, is a supplementary mechanism for social control. Cast in the idiom of witch-killing, homicide is the quasi-official execution of a community threat.

The breakdown in the former structural controls has not been compensated for by the intervention of extracommunity institutions. Attempts to circumvent killing are made by the priest, who counsels against it, warning that the killer will acquire the sins of the man he kills, and by the talking saint of Ixtapa, whom the Indians consult when they are pressed and who advises them to wait—their enemy will be killed for them. This advice is not sufficient to forestall all killings. Motivated by fear, some men still seek to eliminate the object of their fear. The sense of the guardianship of the ancestors and their intermediaries, the curers, is lost along with the intervention of the civil authorities. The individual reacts, using his own means and trying to get sufficient consensus to avoid reprisal.

III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Homicide in the community of Teklum can be a statement of the fear of witchcraft, of revenge, or of quasi-official reprisal depending on the circumstances and social relationships involved. Even in this small, self-contained community, homicide does not have a single meaning, analyzable within a single framework of change.

Homicide is part of the expectation pattern of the town. The patterning of the acts of homicide in terms of time, place, and agent makes possible rules of avoidance both in long- and in short-term calculations for survival. The long-range rules require respect behavior to elders, equals, and juniors and the avoidance of abusive or boastful statements. The short-range rules are to avoid walking alone in the woods or milpas far from town, to stay home at night, and to stop drinking.

Despite the grim and expectable outcome of being killed, not all men heed these rules. The love of power and the projection of self into

3:Nash E-5 (1964-1965)1967
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Teklum
[P 469-A]

682 wider ranges of expression than are usually
183 permitted in the community prompt men to assert the strength of their swayobel, to run races with the animal spirits of others in the assertion of pre-eminence, to boast of their material goods, and to "wake up dead."

682 The increasing rate of homicide is related to
674 the following changes in the community.

178 (1) Increasing friction resulting both from the
578 introduction of new economic enterprises and from political competition by the recently settled land-reform colonies has introduced a new kind of homicide, in which an opponent is killed either by the person whose interests are threatened or by hired killers. It has also stimulated accusations of witchcraft stemming from envy.

[754]
558

682 (2) The curers' loss of leadership and of con-
674 trol over entry into the curing profession
178 has led to competition among them and to
528 a loss of respect for their ability to over-
756 come witchcraft. Curers have become the
754 most frequent suspects of being witches.

(3) Loss of faith in the guardian ancestors and
682 in the guardianship functions acquired
674 from them by the curers has further under-
178 mined the position of the curers as agents
786 of social control. This has aggravated the
626 sense of insecurity and fear, which provokes the uncontrolled use of individual violence.

682 (4) The shift of power from the principales to
674 the town president has led to a breakdown
178 in the system of checks and balances
621 exerted by the principales over the curers,
626 and to a direct confrontation of the curers by civil officials.

756 (5) In the confrontations of the civil authori-
ties and the curers in the '40's and early
682 '50's, the fact that a witchcraft case was
674 officially reviewed and the killing of the
756 witch sanctioned may have served as a
178 brake on the number of such homicides.
626 Since 1953, when this practice was aban-
683 doned, those who have felt themselves or their families to be the victims of witchcraft have been left to their own recourse.

178 The organizational changes summarized
578 here are provoked by structural changes
682 affecting recruitment into the positions of power and the validation of leadership in the
[621] exercise of power. The dual division of the
[632] town provided an accepted basis for recruiting
[756]

7t Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

priest lists only one, San Francisco. Only these top four are hierarchically ordered. The big saints are supposed to be able to make miracles, but there are stories only for San Pedro and Santa Lucía. San Pedro Martyr, *Tatik Martil,* is the only saint possessing a soul. The image of San Pedro shows him with a hatchet in his head, blood dripping over his face. According to legend, San Pedro was the first patron saint of the town. The following story recounts his transformation:

Tatik Martil was of a very foreign kind of heart. He gave permission to the witches to bring sickness. Only those who knew how to make illness spoke with him. They went and asked permission to make the illness continue. People heard he was very evil, and they threw him out of church. They cut off his head, saying, "You only give evil. You do not give any miracles. You have given the old ones permission to give evil."

San Pedro received a new head in Pinola. Now he is good and is of one heart with the Virgin Santa Lucía, with Sacramento, and with San Francisco.

The logic by which San Pedro is cast as leader of the witches is implicit in judgments concerning guilt in cases of homicide. Any man who is killed is referred to as the guilty person, since protecting the village from witchcraft is the main motivation for homicide. When an early priest set up an image of San Pedro in the church, this must have inspired fear and foreboding. He was transmogrified by the people into the leader of the witches, and they burned the church to the ground. (Its foundations are still visible in Alannantik.) Whether the priest at that time (around 1746) convinced the people that, with a new head purchased in Pinola, San Pedro was transformed, or whether the people invented the story, we do not know. Despite his reformation, San Pedro still inspires fear. He is identified with the Lord of Lightning, Tatik Ča?uk. The following is a typical account of his power:

This power comes from his possession of an animal spirit. Whenever the lightning strikes, people know that some sin has been committed. The old people say that he asked a son-in-law to put down a lightning flash. The son-in-law couldn't do it—I don't know why he couldn't do his work—

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

The following list of moral transgressions is roughly ordered in terms of the egregiousness of the crime: witchcraft, theft of cattle, theft of corn, "talking with" a woman (this is a euphemism for having an affair), having more than one wife, killing, and disrespect to parents. There is a fair amount of consistency in the rank order given by different informants. Of five people questioned, all ranked witchcraft first, and theft, without qualification as to what was stolen, second. Subjects questioned differentiated the crime of "talking with" a woman according to the status of the woman —it was worse to have relations with a married woman than with an unmarried girl or with a widow. Killing was listed late or not at all by some because it is assumed that the killer has cause unless the contrary is proved. The dead man is referred to as the guilty one. It is considered worse to kill a consanguineous relative than an affinal relative or a nonrelative. One man remarking on an incident in which a person lost his bull said: "It was a punishment of God for killing his father. If it had been his stepfather, it would be different." Wanton killing is said to be absent in the pueblo, and something that the kurik of the colonias do. The three murders in the past ten years resulting from barroom brawls between "friends" have not dispelled this notion.

Disrespect shown to parents is considered a serious violation of morality. A boy who refuses to listen to his father cannot expect to receive the protection and support of his parents, usually offered a child throughout their lifetime, or of the community. If the son abuses his father verbally or physically in public, the father is supported in whatever action he takes. One father, whose son kicked him in one of the local bars, drew applause when he made the sign of the cross in two deep gashes with his machete on his son's forehead. To beat one's father or mother is a great sin, but to beat one's wife is tolerated, particularly if it is done in drunkenness. If a man other than the husband beats a woman for any cause, she may reciprocate by beating him in court "before the eyes of the judges." One woman who was awarded this privilege when her husband's brother beat her said, "If he were my own husband, it would be all right for him to beat me."

The good man is "of one heart" and reveals it by his humility ("very soft heart"). The rules for demonstrating this are given by an old man who is frequently asked to be a nakawane in his section of the dual divi-

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle

as lawyers. The defendant is sometimes accompanied by supporters who feel that he has a case. The failure of parents to accompany a defendant, regardless of his age, is attributed to their shame over their child's misbehavior and their own failure to train him properly. The judge does not limit himself to passing judgment but also counsels the defendant as to how he should behave.

The town hall is usually shut and locked at noon unless some business requires more time. In the evening about six, the officials return to take their same posts. They sit with their arms drawn inside their woolen jackets for warmth. After a half an hour they drift home. People rely on the presence of officials rather than particular actions to maintain social control, and it is their appearance at regular hours that assures the villagers that the town is being well run.

Local autonomy depends primarily on retaining social control functions. Civil officials try to settle disputes locally and avoid the entry of Ladino officials from the departmental capital, although the judges and president will threaten the defendant with taking the case to the department if they cannot get compliance. The number of cases referred to the capital has been increasing since 1950 as Table 32 shows. In 1951 the federal government began to fine local officials who failed to report homicide cases and accidental death. The local officials complied, but departmental courts were unable to bring action in over half the cases. No action was taken in 72 cases, or 54 percent, in comparison with 62 cases, or 46 percent, in which action was taken. Domestic cases, except for one of adultery, are adequately handled in local courts and do not appear in the departmental records. The trend shows an increasing number of cases of crimes against persons in comparison to crimes against property, an index to the breakdown in social control processes.

The Church

The church has been built and on two occasions rebuilt—when the tower was struck by lightning—with funds collected locally from household heads. Damage to the church was attributed to the patron saint of the neighboring town of Oxchuk who, the people say, was fighting with their patroness, Santa Lucía. The townspeople feel that they own the

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 301]

Tz Nah E-5 (1957-1967) 1970
NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle
C94 682 631
[P300]

TABLE 32. Cases Brought to Departmental Court

	Homicide	Rape	Robbery	Complaint Property damage	Assault	Adultery	Liquor distilling	Accident	Misc.	Action yes	Action no	Action unresolved	Total
1950													
1951	2	1	1							3	1		4
1952	4	1		1						3	3		6
1953	1		1	1	4	1				6	2		8
1954	3		3	1	1		2			6	3	1	10
1955	2		3		2				5	8	1	3	12
1956	3		3	1	2					7	1	1	9
1957	5				3				2	4	3	3	10
1958	4		3		3				2	5	4	3	12
1959	1				4		1	1	1	2	2	4	8
1960	2	2			2		1	2	1	5	2	3	10
1961	4				1			2		1	2	4	7
1962	5				2				1	5	1	2	8
1963	6				3					3	1	5	9
1964	5			1	4					4	2	4	10
1965	9								2		2	9	11
TOTAL	56	4	14	5	31	1	4	5	14	62	30	42	134